

## 2 sentenced to death for killing their uncle over land

By Chioma Onuegbu

**UYO** — TWO men have been sentenced to be hanged by their neck, until they are dead, for killing their uncle, one Imo Effiong Edet over landed property in Ibesikpo Asutan Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

The duo, Joseph Etim (32) from Akpautong and Christopher Macaulay (31), a native of Obio Aduang, both in Ibesikpo Asutan, were condemned to death, yesterday, by an Akwa Ibom State High Court sitting in Uyo. Trial judge in the matter was Justice Okon Okon.

Justice Okon found the accused persons guilty of murder, punishable by death under section 326 (1) of the Criminal Code, Cap 38, Volume 2, Laws of Akwa Ibom State, 2000.

The convicts were said to have confessed that an elder brother of the deceased identified as Imeobong Edet had contracted them to kill his younger brother, Imo Edet, for refusing to give him their late father's landed property.

They also confessed that Imeobong Edet had promised them some portion of the land, should they kill his younger brother, a deal they successfully carried out on November, 19, 2016.

Justice Okon held that there was "admissible evidence that the deceased died instantaneously, following attack, who inflicted machete cuts on his head and slit his throat with a knife."

He described the death as gruesome, adding: "The evidence of the prosecution, including the statement by the wife and son of the deceased and the confession of the accused persons, have satisfied the essential elements of murder."

"The law is trite that where the deceased as in the instant case, was attacked with lethal or dead dealing weapon and died instantly, then medical evidence is not essential and the cause of death can properly be inferred that the wound inflicted caused the death."

"In a criminal trial, confession is the best evidence to prove a crime. It is the evidence given by the accused himself regarding what role he played in the commission of the offense charged. By confession, the accused surrenders himself to the law and becomes his own accuser."

"An accused person can be convicted solely on the basis of his confessional statement proven by the satisfaction of the court. The sentence of this court upon you, Joseph Etim and Christopher Macaulay is that each of you be hanged by the neck, until you be dead. May God have mercy on your soul."

Meanwhile, Imeobong Edet, their elder uncle, who was standing trial in the case as the third accused person, however, died in prison custody and his name struck off.

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